



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 9 – 15 Dec 2013



11 Dec 1914 Army Signal Corps officers in the Philippines conducted the **first U.S. military two-way air-to-ground radio communication**. During World War I and later, radio communications greatly enhanced navigation, real-time reconnaissance and situation updates, air tasking adjustments and coordination of massed air attacks on enemy air and surface forces.

10 Dec 1941 Five B-17 bombers of the 93d Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group carried out the **first heavy bombardment mission of World War II**, attacking a Japanese convoy as it landed troops on northern Luzon in the Philippines. These B-17s were D models (see photo at right). Later B-17 models (see B-17G photo below) had a larger and longer fuselage, a larger tail with a gun, and powered, fully traversable gun turrets in the top and bottom of the fuselage. These modifications greatly improved aircraft defense, especially against rear attacks.



13 Dec 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Secretary of War to **take control of any civilian airline needed for the war effort**. Contracts with the airlines permitted the purchase of aircraft and airline services. Ten years later, on 15 Dec 1951, the USAF directed the Military Air Transport Service to develop the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program. Today, the Commander of U.S. Transportation Command has CRAF authority.

14 Dec 1946 President Truman approved the **Outline Plan establishing seven regional commands**, including Alaskan Command (ALCOM), Far East Command and Pacific Command. The Navy wanted a unified command for the entire Pacific, but the other services preferred that commands be established by mission rather than geographical area. A compromise was reached, resulting in the Outline Plan approved by President Truman.

OPR: PACAF/HO



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Two days later, on 16 Dec 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a **directive establishing Alaskan Command, Far East Command and Pacific Command** effective 1 January 1947. The executive agents for these commands respectively were Commanding General, Army Air Forces (later Chief of Staff, Air Force), the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff, Army. Maj Gen Howard A. Craig, US Army Air Forces, became the first commander of Alaskan Command in addition to serving as the Commander of the Alaskan Department.

10 Dec 1954 **Highest G-forces.** In a rocket-propelled sled run, Lt. Col. John P. Stapp, USAF, reached 632 mph and sustained greater G forces (25 Gs with peaks to 40 Gs) than humans had ever endured in recorded deceleration tests—the equivalent of Mach 1.7 at 35,000 feet. The test determined that **humans could survive ejection from aircraft at supersonic speeds.**



9 Dec 1956 The Air Force received its **first C-130 Hercules** tactical airlifter. This four-engine turboprop had an unrefueled range of over 2,500 miles, could carry outsized cargo of almost 50,000 pounds or up to 92 troops, and could take off and land within about 3,600 feet. The photo at left is a C-130 “Blind Bat” flareship that lit up the night skies over the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam War.

11 Dec 1956 **Operation SAFE HAVEN began.** By 30 June 1957, the U.S. Air Force had airlifted more than 10,000 Hungarian refugees from West Germany to asylum in the United States. The refugees fled their country as Soviet troops crushed an anticommunist rebellion.

This was one of several “safe haven” operations. Operation SAFE HAVEN 1967 airlifted U.S. civilian dependents from Wheelus AFB, Libya. Operation SAFE HAVEN 1994 moved Cuban migrants from Guantanamo to Panama. Operation SAFE HAVEN IRAQ 2009 airlifted endangered Iraqis who had supported U.S. and allied operations in their country.

14 Dec 1964 **Operation BARREL ROLL armed reconnaissance missions were first flown in Laos.** This mission was the start of continuous tactical fighter operations in Southeast Asia. Aircraft used included the AT-28 Trojan and A-1E Skymaster (right).





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9 Dec 1992 **Operation RESTORE HOPE I.** Through 4 May 1993, AMC aircraft moved 51,431 passengers and 41,243 tons of cargo in more than 1,000 missions to support UN peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The 28,000 deployed troops protected the food, supplies, and aid workers from armed factions in the country. Air Force Reserve crews flew 190 sorties to deliver 1,500 tons of supplies, while refuelers completed 1,170 missions to deliver 82.4 million pounds of fuel. At right, aerial port personnel and infantrymen prepare a Bradley M2-A2 fighting vehicle for transport on a C-5 to Mogadishu, Somalia.



13 Dec 2001 President George Bush provided a formal six-month notice to Russia of the **United States' withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**. President Bush stated: "I have concluded the ABM treaty hinders our government's ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks." It cleared the way for the construction of a missile defense system in Alaska. The plans called for basing a command center and silo-based missiles at Fort Greely and an advanced radar installation at Eareckson AS on Shemya. Additional components of the missile defense system are at other locations such as Vandenberg AFB, California. (Photo at left shows the first ground-based interceptor missile being lowered into its silo in 2004.)

15 Dec 2005 **The F-22A Raptor reached initial operating capability (IOC)** for the 27th Fighter Squadron and the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB. The F-22 has a low-observable, highly maneuverable airframe, advanced integrated avionics and aerodynamic performance allowing supersonic cruise without afterburner.

